
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6303

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF ILL AND INJURED ANIMALS IN MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTERS.

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes any regional or municipal dog pound to contract with a public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization for the organization to pay a licensed veterinarian to treat an injured, sick, or diseased animal that is impounded. The bill specifies what a contract must contain.

By law, a municipality may use a dog pound to shelter other animals that are injured, mistreated, or roaming in a manner that endangers the animal or the public. State regulations require a dog pound to have a licensed veterinarian examine any impounded dog that appears sick or injured (Conn. Agencies Reg. § 22-336-28).

Under the bill, a regional or municipal dog pound, municipality, municipal or regional animal control officer (ACO), or public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization is not criminally or civilly liable for actions taken to have a licensed veterinarian treat an injured, sick, or diseased animal under a contract the bill authorizes. The bill bars civil liability for treatment provided by a licensed veterinarian to an injured, sick, or diseased animal as a result of such a contract.

The bill also requires the ACO, when the owner of an impounded dog or other animal is unknown, to post its photograph or description and the date on which it will be available for adoption on a national pet adoption website. If the ACO does not have the technological resources to post the information, he or she must contact a public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization and request that it (1) post the information and (2) pay any related expenses. Under existing law, the ACO must post a description of such an animal in a local

newspaper.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

CONTRACT

Under the bill, the contract must establish that:

1. the municipality will not become responsible for treatment costs incurred under it;
2. the public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization responsible for payment selects the licensed veterinarian who treats an animal;
3. a regional or municipal ACO that has custody of the animal determines whether it is injured, sick, or diseased and needs veterinary treatment, but if any pound employer or volunteer notifies the ACO that an animal is injured, sick, or diseased and needs treatment, the ACO must contact the organization to arrange treatment; and
4. the nonprofit animal rescue organization must, within 24 hours of a facility's request for treatment, select a licensed veterinarian and take custody or control of an animal, if necessary, to have the veterinarian treat the animal immediately.

BACKGROUND

Pounds

Each municipality, other than those participating in a regional dog pound, must:

1. provide and maintain a suitable building as a pound, which must be comfortable for the detention and care of dogs and kept in a sanitary condition or
2. provide, through written agreement, for the detention and care of impounded dogs by a licensed veterinarian, veterinary hospital, or commercial kennel; dog pound maintained by

another city; or other suitable facility approved by the agriculture commissioner.

Any municipality may use the pound or facility to shelter other animals that are injured, mistreated, or roaming in a manner that endangers the animal or the public (CGS § 22-336).

Legislative History

On April 6, the House referred the bill (File 243) to the Environment Committee, which favorably reported a substitute that adds the contract provision in place of a requirement for ACOs to arrange treatment for an impounded animal that is ill or injured and a system for nonprofit organizations to arrange treatment when a dog pound could not afford it.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 1 (03/07/2011)

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 23 Nay 0 (04/08/2011)